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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2155
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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0448
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0650
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RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002374

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Global War on Terror

Key stories in the media:

While Yediot reported that PM-designate Tzipi Livni has offered Shas 1 billion shekels (around \$ 260 million), Maariv reported that Livni signaled to Shas that she can no longer wait for the party to enter

the coalition (major media reported that Shas rejected Livni's offer of 700-800 million shekels (around \$ 182-209 million)). Maariv reported that Livni will hold a crucial meeting with Shas representatives today. Israel Radio quoted a Kadima source involved in the negotiations as saying that Shas's terms are irresponsible. Maariv quoted Livni's associates as saying that Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz will not vote against a narrow-based government. The Jerusalem Post reported that Meretz MK Zehava Gal-On told the newspaper that Kadima is willing to meet most of Meretz's demands.

Maariv cited the IDF Intelligence assessment that Syrian President Bashar Assad is serious about making peace. The newspaper quoted a senior Foreign Ministry official as saying that Assad is following Anwar Sadat's course.

Israel Radio reported that yesterday hundreds of people visited the abandoned West Bank settlement of Homesh.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday the IDF agreed to the deployment of about 500 Palestinian policemen in the coming days to participate in a PA-backed crackdown on Hamas infrastructure in Hebron.

HaQaretz reported that the Chief Military Rabbinate has recently expanded its educational activities in IDF combat units, and in doing so has entered areas previously served only by the Education Corps. Many commanders accept offers of such programs since the rabbinate pays for these activities, while the units must foot the bill for events run by the Education Corps. HaQaretz reported that a senior officer told the daily that the Chief Military Rabbinate's behavior "harms the delicate fabric of relations between the nonreligious and religious in the IDF. In a number of cases it is religious brainwashing and, indirectly, also political [brainwashing]." IDF Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, ordered an investigation of the matter this week and requested to redraw the "borders" between the rabbinate and Education Corps.

HaQaretz reported that Israel's intelligence community has drawn up a list of dozens of former senior security officials who may be targets of Hizbullah attacks. The list was prepared in response to Hizbullah's threats to avenge the assassination of its "operations officer," Imad Mughniyah, last February. Hizbullah blames Israel for the killing. Leading media quoted the Iraqi Web site Almalaf Yon as saying yesterday that Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah was poisoned last week and that Iranian doctors were rushed to Lebanon to treat him, saving his life. The report quoted "western diplomatic sources" as saying that Israel was apparently behind the assassination attempt, adding that the Shiite group has launched an investigation into the incident. Israeli media said that a senior Hizbullah figure called the report a "fabrication", saying "I haven't seen Nasrallah in a week, but I know he is in good health." Maariv and The Jerusalem Post reported that dozens of cocaine smugglers and money launderers were arrested in Bogota last week on suspicion of transferring part of their income to Hizbullah.

Leading media reported that DM Ehud Barak has put forward a new proposal aimed at pressuring Hamas back into negotiations about Gilad Shalit. The proposal centers on limiting the visitation rights Israel awards Palestinian inmates belonging to, or associated with, Hamas. Barak has submitted the proposal to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz for review, asking him to cut back on the visiting hours allotted to inmates. Israel Radio quoted official Egyptian sources as saying that Israel is going back on its agreement to release 1,500 Palestinians in three stages in exchange for Shalit, and that there is no agreement on the Palestinians' identity.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Olmert associate MK Otniel Schneller told the newspaper yesterday that Olmert is striving to reach a diplomatic agreement if a new government is not formed.

Israel Radio reported that this morning in Jerusalem a Palestinian stabbed and seriously wounded two Israelis. HaQaretz and other media reported that yesterday an IDF soldier was lightly wounded in clashes with settlers near the West Bank settlement of Otniel, while three border policemen were lightly wounded in clashes with Israeli leftists and Palestinians near the West Bank town of Na'alin.

Yediot reported that next month Queen Elizabeth will bestow knighthood on President Shimon Peres.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Agence France Presse as saying that yesterday the U.S. signed an agreement to give \$150 million to the government of PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel has fallen in the rankings of the World Press Freedom Index, published each year by the non-profit, Paris-based, Reporters without Borders. The group singled out Israel's treatment of journalists on the other side of the Green Line.

Yediot reported that Ehud Olmert's diplomatic aide Shalom Turgeman is a leading candidate for the post of ambassador to Jordan.

HaQaretz reported that Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv and former Knesset member Yael Dayan will soon leave City Hall, ending 16 years of public service.

Yediot cited a report issued by the Dutch Foreign Ministry according to which the incident in which Yediot reporter Tzadok Yehezkeili was seriously wounded while reporting from Gori, Georgia, was the result of Russian use of cluster bombs in a civilian area. Russia denies using this weapon.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama have enlisted expatriate Americans in Israel, particularly those hailing from Florida. The newspaper also reported that American expatriates in Israel will send 42,000 ballots for the elections, including thousands in Ohio and Florida.

The media highlighted the deaths of a veteran IAF pilot and of a cadet -Q the son of an immigrant family from the U.S. -- in the prestigious Pilot's Course yesterday when their training plane crashed in the Negev.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, the USG transferred to the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court its request to extradite the two Abergil brothers and three other criminals wanted by U.S.

Leading media reported that yesterday an Al-Qaida-associated Web site endorsed Sen. John McCain.

The media reported on the strong showing of the U.S. dollar on the Israeli money market.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: QBy restoring some sort of Jordanian option to the picture Israel will begin to advance towards a final status arrangement with the Palestinians.

Block Quotes:

"What's So Bad About a Hamas Regime?"

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/23): QSome people in Israel have been circulating Qhorror scenariosQ lately in which Hamas seizes control of Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank] as it did in the Gaza Strip. Is that outcome truly terrible for Israel? Arguably, it could be a desirable outcome from Israel's perspective. That will bring about an end to the fictional and dangerous negotiations with Fatah and the Palestinian national movement, as if it were possible to resolve the problem of the refugees, Jerusalem and so forth. We need to admit after the rivers of blood that have flown here that those issues cannot be resolved and only an irresponsible person would stick his head back into that lion's mouth, as was done at

Oslo.... And here is the ... most important point of all: it behooves Israel to open the border between the West Bank and the East Bank, to wit, Jordan, in coordination with the Jordanians. Just as the Rafah border crossing is going to be opened with the Egyptians, which will herald the renewed Egyptian involvement in administering Gaza affairs, the same thing needs to be done with the Jordanians, and they know that. Jordan will be better than Israel at supervising the border -- what and who gets into Judea and Samaria -- a point that will begin to mark a solution to the refugee problem: Gaza will be placed under Egyptian responsibility, Palestinian Judea and Samaria will be placed under Jordanian responsibility. By restoring some sort of Jordanian option to the picture Israel will begin to advance towards a final status arrangement with the Palestinians: the security fence will separate them from Israel and there will be increased Egyptian responsibility in Gaza and increased Jordanian responsibility for the Arab parts of Judea and Samaria. What will the Egyptians or the Jordanians do with the deposit that is going to be returned to them for the first time since 1967? Israel needs to aspire for that to be their problem. If they establish a state or not (the Egyptians and Jordanians aren't going to let that happen) -- as far as we are concerned, that isn't our problem.

12. Global War on Terror:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: QIn a telling interview three years before September 11, 2001, [bin Laden] observed that, clearly, America had lost the will to fight. It has since costs thousands of American lives to disabuse him of this notion. Would it not have been better to do so from the start?

Block Quotes:

"Iwo Jima Redux"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/23): Q[Since Hizbullah's attacks on the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983], America, and especially Europe, have sought to avoid an unpleasant, even painful confrontation with Iran. And anyway, there was business to be done. There was, moreover, the delusion that the mullahs, once engaged, could be cajoled into being good world citizens. Consequently, both Iran and Hizbullah have grown ever more assertive. One works to build nuclear weapons; the other dominates Lebanon's polity. Offstage, meanwhile, a little-known Sunni fanatic, Osama bin Ladin, watched America's feeble response to Iranian and Hizbullah aggression. In a telling interview three years before September 11, 2001, he observed that, clearly, America had lost the will to fight. It has since costs thousands of American lives to disabuse him of this notion. Would it not have been better to do so from the start?

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